

very considerable experience of mental deficiency, has correctly attributed to me the belief that "heredity is the largest single discoverable cause of mental deficiency," and has done so with the objective, I think, of proving me in error. Should an investigation of these Stoke Park cases prove heredity to be but a negligible factor, my opinion, I trust, would be correspondingly modified. Until, however, such proof is forthcoming I shall remain convinced that Sir Bernard Mallet's "Social Problem Group" will be found to be a breeding hotbed for human defectives—many of them of less intelligence than the domestic pets of the hearth and of considerably worse pedigree than our prize cattle and favourite hunters.

Whether an inquiry, properly carried out and controlled by scientific method, did or did not support my own conviction of the hereditary transmission of mental defect—using the word in its widest sense rather than its merely legal—I need scarcely add that it would give me the greatest satisfaction to see such an inquiry carried out, and hence my offer of this wealth of material.

RICHARD J. A. BERRY.

Stoke Park Colony,  
Stapleton,  
Bristol.

## "Stigmata of Degeneracy"

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—In your last issue the above title was given on the cover (though not inside) to my article on scapulæ; and I hope you will forgive my saying that it rather misrepresents my own attitude in biology.

The idea underlying the rather large chapter in literature headed "Stigmata of Degeneration" is a biological misconception, and the sooner this phrase disappears from the world's literature, the better. The most perfect human specimen will show a number of stigmata, which, interpreting them as signs of degeneration, leads to the conclusion that our perfect specimen is a degenerate. Many of the so-called stigmata are discontinuous, chance or infrequent variations which may, or may not, be inherited and transmissible, and if not, can have no biological significance. Family studies based upon so-called stigmata alone can determine the frequency of transmission of so-called stigmata, and the application of the age-incidence principle alone to population groups can determine their biological significance. By such studies, most, if not all, discontinuous, chance or infrequent inherited variations will probably be shown to have no biological significance whatever, and only those frequently transmitted will be found

to have such. Scapular types are inherited variations transmitted from generation to generation with unusual frequency. I have never thought of any particular scapular type as a stigma of degeneration, and it is my constant prayer that no one will ever do so.

WILLIAM W. GRAVES.

713, Metropolitan Building, Saint Louis, U.S.A.

[We should be very sorry if our use of this word—almost essential for so brief a phrase as a cover title—should have given rise to misapprehension. Stigmata is a common generic term used with a laudatory implication—e.g. the stigmata of the Nails and Spear—quite as often as in an opprobrious sense. There was no implication that certain types of scapulæ were inevitably signs of degeneration.—EDITOR.]

## Eugenics and Democracy

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—Dr. R. Austin Freeman says in his valuable article, "Segregation of the Fit" (p. 207), that democracy stands in the way of eugenics because it will not promote legislation to "encourage the multiplication of the definitely superior classes and discourage or restrain that of the definitely inferior." I reluctantly submit that he is wrong, if I am right in my view of the question. I believe (1) that when practically no woman in the poorest classes will have more than two confinements there will develop a change—in economic conditions, in pride of parenthood, and in the call of patriotism—which will lead to nearly every woman in the other classes having more than two children; (2) that if a government made medical practitioners free to terminate a pregnancy when the woman asked for this, practically no woman of the poorest classes would have more than two confinements—except, perhaps, in areas where the influence of priests was strong; and (3) that it is a democratic government which will be most likely to pass such legislation, although not on eugenic grounds.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—Dr. Dunlop's optimistic letter must be considered with the respect due to the writer's great experience in connection with the Neo-Malthusian movement, and we should all be very willing to be convinced that his forecast is correct. It is, however, rather highly hypothetical and assumes the occurrence of social and political changes which are not yet in sight. My own more pessimistic view was based on

the conditions now actually existing and on the trend of political theory and practice during the present century. The accepted principle that the burdens of life must be lifted from the shoulders of the inefficient and placed on those of the efficient, seems to be incurably dysgenic; and this loading of the dice against the Survival of the Fittest appears to command universal approval.

But neither view admits of demonstrative proof; and, really, the question is, in connection with my proposal, of only academic interest. Dr. Dunlop will surely agree with me that a League of persons associated with the conscious purpose of safeguarding the interests of their children and more remote posterity (a League which might, in time, come to include a large part of the population) would be a valuable institution, whatever the political conditions of the future might be.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

that there should be an equal chance for all to succeed, so that we might have the best possible chance of finding inherited talent which is now submerged by lack of opportunity. When we have found it, we should devise means of encouraging its reproduction. We should be quite uninterested in inherited titles, for if the character which has earned the title is really inherited, then the offspring should obviously earn the title for himself without having it forced upon him!

With regard to J. Banister's letter, I should have no hesitation in resigning from the *Society* rather than remain in it with him, were it not that I want to continue to support the splendid work that the *Society* is doing in pressing for the legalization of Eugenic sterilization.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN R. BAKER.

Department of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy, University Museum, Oxford.

## Eugenics and Snobbery

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—I object strongly to the letters from A. M. Ludovici and J. Banister in the October number of *THE EUGENICS REVIEW*. The former was favourably commented upon in your editorial columns.

The attitude of A. M. Ludovici is that of a cow which attacks a wounded member of the herd simply because it is wounded. That attitude may be excusable in a cow, but it is objectionable in a human being. There can be no doubt that many people have been attracted to Eugenics for no better reason than that they are anti-humanitarians or snobs. Their presence in the *Society* and the expression of their views in its journal are sufficient to keep many desirable people out of the *Society*. Will you allow me to put forward a humanitarian, anti-snobish view of what Eugenics should be?

Firstly, humanitarians should be attracted to Eugenics because of the enormous reduction in the amount of suffering which would result from its proper application. The life of people with serious inherited defects is one long misery. It would be humane to prevent them from being born. But when they have been born, then we, as Eugenists, should be particularly careful to see that they are properly and humanely looked after, because we realize more clearly than others that their mental or other defect is not in the smallest degree their own fault. We should prevent them from reproducing, but we should study their welfare.

Secondly, we should be the last people in the world to be snobs. We should try to arrange

### *To the Editor, Eugenics Review*

SIR,—Dr. J. R. Baker seems quite unconscious of the fact that he is under the sway of popular values and does not even suspect that these popular values are not absolute values. This makes it very difficult to put him right. That is why, as I have said again and again, long before I had any concrete evidence of the Dr. Bakers of this world, I do not belong to your *Society*. But this does not make me call Dr. Baker a "snob" or a "cow." I am much too scientific. The object one chooses for one's pity is determined by the values to which one's taste has directed one. I personally choose for my pity the steadily dwindling number of the hale and the sound. It is on them that the future depends. It is their existence that is threatened by the increasing hordes of the bungled and botched, and by the sacrifices they are called upon to make for the latter. Dr. Baker's values, however, like those of millions of English people to-day, make him ready to sacrifice the sound and hale for the unsound, the greater for the less. The difference between him and me is that I long ago renounced his values, and that he has never even heard of mine. I approve of the farmer who, on seeing his precious crops choked by dodder pities the precious crops. Dr. Baker would have him pity the dodder.

If Dr. Baker had been scientific, he would have seen all this. He would also have seen that all I suggested was that the bungled and botched might be made to share with the sound the sacrifice now being demanded of the nation. In a culture ruled by different values from those Dr. Baker unconsciously follows, it would not